

REMARKS**Status of the Claims**

Claims 1-3, 5-9, 11-15, and 17-21 are currently present in the Application, and claims 1, 7, 13, and 19-21 are independent claims. Claims 1, 5-7, 11-14, and 17-21 have been amended, and claims 4, 10, and 16 have been canceled.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 4-6 and 10-12 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim. Applicants have amended claims 1, 7, 13, and 19-21, and canceled claims 4, 10, and 16 from further consideration in this Application. Applicants are not conceding in this Application that those claims are not patentable over the art cited by the Examiner, as the present claim amendments and cancellations are only for facilitating expeditious prosecution of the allowable subject matter noted by the Examiner. Applicants respectfully reserve the right to pursue these and other claims in one or more continuation and/or divisional patent applications.

In particular, Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to include limitations previously found in dependent claim 4, and have therefore canceled claim 4. Similarly, Applicants have amended independent claims 7 and 13 to include limitations previously found in dependent claims 10 and 16, respectively, and have therefore canceled claims 10 and 16. Applicants have further amended independent claims 19-21 to include elements similar to those found in independent claims 1, 7, and 13. Applicants therefore respectfully request that independent claims 1, 7, 13, and 19-21, and the claims which depend from them, be allowed.

Drawings

The Office Action does not indicate whether Applicants' formal drawings, filed with the Application on February 2, 2004, are accepted by the Examiner. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner indicate whether Applicants' formal drawings are accepted in the next communication.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 101

Claims 13-18 and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter. Applicants have amended independent claims 13 and 21 to clarify that Applicants claim a tangible computer storage medium containing instructions for execution by a computer, which, when executed by the computer, cause the computer to implement the claimed method. Claims 14, 17, and 18 have been amended to be consistent with amended, independent claim 13. Claim 16 has been canceled.

Based on the above, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 101 have been overcome and respectfully request that the Examiner remove the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 101.

Claim Rejections - Alleged Anticipation Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 3, 7, 9, 13, and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Kupiec, U.S. Patent No. 6,533,822 (hereinafter Kupiec). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

Based on the amendments to independent claims 1, 7, and 13, as discussed above, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102 are now moot. Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1, 7, and 13, and the claims which depend from them, are not anticipated by Kupiec, and respectfully request that they be allowed.

Claim Rejections – Alleged Obviousness Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 2, 8, 14, and 19-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kupiec in view of Milic-Frayling et al., U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0100510 (hereinafter Milic-Frayling). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

Note that claims 2, 8, and 14 each depend from an allowable independent claim. Based on the amendments to independent claims 1, 7, 13, and 19-21, as discussed above, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103 are now moot. Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1, 7, 13, 19-21, and the claims which depend from them, are patentable over Kupiec in view of Milic-Frayling, and respectfully request that they be allowed.

Conclusion

As a result of the foregoing, it is asserted by Applicants that the remaining claims in the Application are in condition for allowance, and Applicants respectfully request an early allowance of such claims.

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the Applicants' attorney listed below if the Examiner believes that such a discussion would be helpful in resolving any remaining questions or issues related to this Application.

Respectfully submitted,

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